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Edited by Robert P. Langley

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The Expendable: These are the 42 Oregon state prisoners who have died from COVID-19

As of March 5, there had been 3,549 confirmed cases of COVID-19 among the state's 12,586 prisoners, with the virus reaching all but one of the state's 15 correctional facilities.

As cases escalated among state prisons, Gov. Kate Brown granted early releases in piecemeal fashion. Oregon DOC estimated in April [2020] that it would need to release 5,800 people to adhere to social distancing guidelines.

Two months later, Brown issued the first round of commuted sentences, releasing 57 prisoners. In July [2020], legislators presented Brown with a plan to release 2,000 prisoners safely, but she declined. In September [2020], she released 66 more.

Meanwhile, reports of prison staffers and occupants refusing to wear masks while making little effort to protect vulnerable prisoners have been reported by various media outlets around the state, and at least two class-action lawsuits have been filed against the Oregon DOC. One successfully argued for a judicial order to immediately provide vaccines to all prisoners in state custody. Since the Feb. 3 ruling, 9,156 prisoners have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, and 1,256 have received their second dose, said Oregon DOC spokesperson Jennifer Black.

Another lawsuit filed against the department includes allegations from more than 90 prisoners who describe how the virus spread like wildfire through prison facilities and eventually their bodies; five prisoners described learning of and living with the deaths of those they knew.

When asked to provide information about deceased prisoners' next of kin, Oregon DOC refused. Doing so, the agency said, would "interfere with the rehabilitation of a person in custody of the department or substantially prejudice or prevent the carrying out of the functions of the department."

The department also declined to contact any next of kin on behalf of Street Roots after being provided with a short list of prisoners we were interested in profiling for this package.

Without any leads from the department, profiling prisoners was a challenge. Many had been incarcerated for years with few connections or paper trails outside prison walls.

Some of the families Street Roots contacted were reluctant to have their names published, but many expressed a desire to pay tribute to their lost loved ones. Each family had different relationships and experiences with the criminal justice system and news media, but they all shared a similar belief: These deaths could have been avoided.

About half of the deceased were serving time for sex offenses, and ten were serving time for murder. Due to the length of sentences associated with those crimes, many of these prisoners were older, some of their crimes stemming from events a half-century ago.

But others were serving shorter sentences for crimes such as identity theft, parole violations, drug possession and robbery.

We decided against listing the deceased's convictions - which are easily accessible public records - alongside their names. This is not because Street Roots is attempting to minimize the severity of their crimes, which are serious. It is because our intention in naming these prisoners is to illuminate the humanity that exists behind the anonymous COVID-19 death reports released by the state.

This listing serves as the closest thing to an obituary or memorial the vast majority of deceased named in these pages will be bestowed, and to label them with their crimes and little else would only serve to dehumanize them further and minimize their deaths.

Oregon Department of Corrections has not released the names of the prisoners who died from COVID-19, citing health care privacy laws. Street Roots determined who they were by cross-referencing news releases from the department about COVID-19 deaths and other reports with lists of prisoner deaths obtained through public records requests. Records we received from the department were automated and contained numerous errors, including some inaccurate death dates and inaccurate release dates. We worked with the department to correct these errors to ensure the accuracy of this report.

Some Indigenous communities practice a year of no photos following a person's death. Street Roots took steps to reach family of known Indigenous people in this report regarding the publication of their loved one's photograph. [Editor's note: AIC photos for this newsletter were removed]. Here are the prisoners who died from COVID-19. The deceased are listed in the order of their death.

- ❑ Greg Chavez, 53 - Died 5/20/2020 Oregon State Penitentiary
- ❑ Louis Jackson, 63 - Died 8/12/2020 Snake River Correctional
- ❑ Warren Hill, 73 - Died 8/26/2020 Two Rivers Correctional Institution
- ❑ David Windham, 54 - Died 8/26/2020 Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution
- ❑ Dennis Howes, 66 - Two Rivers Correctional Institution
- ❑ Barry Larsen, 64 - Died 9/06/2020 Snake River Correctional Institution
- ❑ Lavern Carlton, 82 - Died 9/22/2020 Snake River Correctional Institution
- ❑ Richard Torres, 69 - Died 9/25/2020 Snake River Correctional Institution
- ❑ Brian McCarvill, 68 - Died 9/27/2020 Snake River Correctional Institution
- ❑ James Kempf, 81 - Died 10/03/2020 Snake River Correctional Institution
- ❑ Timothy McElroy, 62 - Died 10/04/2020 Snake River Correctional Institution

- ❑ Donald Bennett, 71 - Died 10/05/2020 Snake River Correctional Institution
- ❑ Gilberto Pedroso, 77 - Died 10/06/2020 Snake River Correctional Institution
- ❑ Wayne Denson, 74 - Died 10/13/2020 Snake River Correctional Institution
- ❑ Michael Abelin, 57 - Died 10/17/2020 Snake River Correctional Institution
- ❑ Gregory Burns, 53 - Died 10/19/2020 Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution
- ❑ Nicholas Zangari, 51 - Died 11/23/2020 Oregon State Correctional Institution
- ❑ James Moore, 81 - Died 11/30/2020 Oregon State Correctional Institution
- ❑ Joseph Jones, 76 - Died 12/10/2020 Deer Ridge Correctional Institution
- ❑ Roger McPherson, 59 - Died 12/18/2020 Deer Ridge Correctional Institution
- ❑ Andrew Boyer, 59 - Died 12/27/2020 Oregon State Penitentiary
- ❑ Bernardino Garcia, 32 - Died 12/30/2020 Oregon State Penitentiary
- ❑ Paul Villines, 56 - Died 1/02/2021 Two River Correctional Institution
- ❑ Peter Bara, 47 - Died 1/03/2021 Coffee Creek Correctional Institution
- ❑ Antonio Arevalo, 89 - Died 1/06/2021 Two Rivers Correctional Institution
- ❑ John Fuller, 71 - Died 1/07/2021 Oregon State Penitentiary
- ❑ Cecil Norton, 72 - Died 1/10/2021 Two Rivers Correctional Institution
- ❑ Rennie Dearborn, 69 - Died 1/14/2021 Snake River Correctional Institution
- ❑ Austin Coleman, 57 - Died 1/16/2021 Coffee Creek Correctional Facility
- ❑ Douglas Turnbow, 76 - Died 1/16/2021 Two Rivers Correctional Institution
- ❑ Lloyd Ward, 76 - Died 1/16/2021 Two Rivers Correctional Institution
- ❑ Carlyle Sands, 59 - Died 1/17/2021 Two Rivers Correctional Institution
- ❑ John Freeman, 64 - Died 1/18/2021 Snake River Correctional Institution
- ❑ James Hargrave, 70 - Died 1/20/2021 Two Rivers Correctional Institution
- ❑ Jessie Ballew, 71 - Died 1/21/2021 Two Rivers Correctional Institution
- ❑ Donald Easley, 71 - Died 1/21/2021 Two Rivers Correctional Institution
- ❑ Russell Lee, 57 - Died 1/21/2021 Oregon State Penitentiary
- ❑ Juan Tristan, 58 - Died 1/22/2021 Oregon State Penitentiary
- ❑ James Owens, 78 - Died 1/24/2021 Coffee Creek Correctional Facility
- ❑ Donald Hilburn, 58 - Died 1/26/2021 Two Rivers Correctional Institution
- ❑ Phyll Mendacino, 65 - Died 1/26/2021 Two Rivers Correctional Institution
- ❑ William Vance, 72 - Died 1/29/2021 Two Rivers Correctional Institution. (RPL)

Rest in Paradise



Go West. How did the term "go west" come to be used as synonym for death? In the beginning this term did not mean "to die" but just "to disappear from sight." In the early days of our country many men who were wanted for a crime in the East "went out West" into the wilderness. Some lived; some died; but all who wished to do so disappeared from sight. But since they "might as well be dead" the term in time came to mean death. (RPL)

THE VOICE OF THE VOICELESS

By Ella Wheeler Wilcox (1910)

I am the voice of the voiceless;
Through me the dumb shall speak;
Till the deaf world's ear be made to hear
The cry of the wordless weak.
From street, from cage, and from kennel,
From jungle and stall, the wail
Of my tortured kin proclaims the sin
Of the mighty against the frail.

I am a ray from the centre;
And I will feed God's spark,
Till a great light glows in the night and shows
The dark deeds done in the dark.
And full on the thoughtless sleeper
Shall flash its glaring flame,
Till he wakens to see what crimes may be
Cloaked under an honoured name.

The same Force formed the sparrow
That fashioned man, the king;
The God of the Whole gave a spark of soul
To furred and to feathered thing.
And I am my brother's keeper,
And I will fight his fight,
And speak the word for beast and bird,
Till the world shall set things right.

Let no voice cavil at Science--
The strong torch-bearer of God;
For brave are his deeds, though dying creeds,
Must fall where his feet have trod.
But he who would trample kindness
And mercy into the dust--
He has missed the trail, and his quest will fail:

He is not the guide to trust.

For love is the true religion,
And love is the law sublime;
And all that is wrought, where love is not,
Will die at the touch of time.
And Science, the great revealer,
Must flame his torch at the Source;
And keep it bright with that holy light,
Or his feet shall fail on the course.

Oh, never a brute in the forest,
And never a snake in the fen,
Or ravening bird, starvation stirred,
Has hunted its prey like men.
For hunger, and fear, and passion
Alone drive beasts to slay,
But wonderful man, the crown of the plan,
Tortures, and kills, for play.

He goes well fed from his table;
He kisses his child and wife;
Then he haunts a wood, till he orphans a brood,
Or robs a deer of its life.
He aims at a speck in the azure;
Winged love, that has flown at a call;
It reels down to die, and he lets it lie;
His pleasure was seeing it fall.

And one there was, weary of laurels,
Of burdens and troubles of State;
So the jungle he sought, with the beautiful thought
Of shooting a she lion's mate.
And one came down from the pulpit,
In the pride of a duty done,
And his cloth sufficed, as his emblem of Christ,
While murder smoked out of his gun.

One strays from the haunts of fashion
 With an indolent, unused brain;
 But his sluggish heart feels a sudden start
 In the purpose of giving pain.
 And the fluttering flock of pigeons,
 As they rise on eager wings,
 From prison to death, bring a catch in his breath:



Oh, the rapture of killing things!

Now, this is the race as we find it,
 Where love, in the creed, spells hate;
 And where bird and beast meet a foe in the priest
 And in rulers of fashion and State.
 But up to the Kingdom of Thinkers
 Has risen the cry of our kin;
 And the weapons of thought are burnished and brought
 To clash with the bludgeons of sin.

Far Christ, of a million churches,
 Come near to the earth again;
 Be more than a Name; be a living Flame;
 'Make Good' in the hearts of men.
 Shine full on the path of Science,
 And show it the heights above,
 Where vast truths lie for the searching eye
 That shall follow the torch of love.

(RPL)

ODOC Regulations On AIC Media Content in OSP (by RPL)

In mid-February, I was asked to write an article about the restrictions placed on AIC media content by the Oregon Department of Corrections (ODOC). That is, media content delivered to AIC through MP3/4s, videos, film and video games. The following is a summation of what I learned from looking into this matter.

My research began by sending Brandon Kelly, Superintendent, Oregon State Penitentiary (OSP), the following email:

"Greetings. As always, I hope this email reaches you in good health and spirit. I am thinking about writing an article for the *Lifers' Unlimited Club Newsletter* that reviews the ODOC's policy of censoring and/or restricting the content in AIC music (lyrics in a song), mail (photos), film (content and/or subject matter) and video games (violence). In doing so, I need to educate myself on why this policy exists, etc. Therefore, if possible, would you be available to discuss the reasons for the "adult content restrictions" on OSP's AIC? For example, does the administration view it as a necessary component towards facilitating AIC rehabilitation? And, if so, why? Please let me know if you're available to have this conversation? And, if you're not the person that I should begin this conversation with will please point me in the right direction?"

This email leads to a productive conversation with Mr. Kelly through which he acknowledged (to the best of his recollection) the lack of any specific rules and/or policies directed towards restricting AIC content in music, film and video games. After our conversation, I sent Mr. Kelly a follow up email stating, in part:

"I'm writing this as a follow up to my 2/22/2021 email - and - our subsequent conversation on the Activities Floor regarding the origins of the rule and/or policy restricting AIC content in music (lyrics in a song), mail (photos), film (content and/or subject matter) and video games (violence

and/or subject matter). * * * * Can you please put me in touch with someone at OSP who can speak knowledgeably about the origins of the rule/policy of restricting AIC content in music, film and video games? Preferably, someone who is not only knowledgeable about it, but can also provide me with a written copy of the rule/policy so that I can publish it in the *Lifers' Newsletter*."

In response, Mr. Kelly put me in touch with Brent Eriksen who researched the matter and provided me with a copy of the ODOC guidelines entitled *Movie, TV Series and Video Game Selection Criteria and Process* (printed below). Mr. Eriksen also put me in touch with Kelly Rath, who informed me that in order to eliminate any potential copyright violations (on movies shown in congregate settings) the ODOC acquired the services of Swank, a company that provides movies and movie licensing to prisons around the U.S. that want to show films *legally* on their property. According to the *Federal Copyright Act*, copyrighted materials like movies can only be used for a public performance if they're properly licensed. Importantly, a "public performance" is an exhibition of a movie that is shown outside of someone's home. What's more, the unauthorized use of someone else's copyrighted materials has been illegal in the U.S. since 1970; therefore, neither the rental nor purchase of a movie carries the right to exhibit it outside of one's home. So, in order to maintain compliance with the U.S. copyright laws, the ODOC was required to contract the services of a company that provided movie-licensing agreements to correctional institutions. Once licensed, ODOC can exhibit any movies by the studios Swank represent as long as they are secured from a legal source such as a rental source, the public library and/or a personal collection.

Unsurprisingly, Swank's website asserts "most of the major studios have made copyright compliance simpler and less expensive for correctional institutions *by appointing Swank as their sole agent to assist in their copyright enforcement program*." (Emphasis added). Their website also states: (a) "the institution itself must be licensed to legally show [its] movies"; and (b) "only Swank or the studio that produced the movie can grant copyright compliance." In short, a third party (e.g., a DVD rental company) cannot pass on copyright compliance to the institution; therefore, by way of its licensing agreements, Swank plays a role in regulating the movies ODOC is permitted to show. Most notably, Swank has a corrections specific licensing wing that makes content determinations and recommendations as part of their services to ODOC. In other words, it appears that ODOC has moved away from solely setting content standards and instead relies, at least in part, on Swank determining AIC content through its media packaging. When extrapolated out it's the same for media content arriving at the institution through the tablets and MP3/4 players. For all intents and purposes licensing agreements – packaged by vendors for corrections consumption – appear to be the major force behind the regulation of AIC media content.

It's not that ODOC doesn't have a voice in the matter; presumably, it's just easier for them to purchase a presorted homogenized bundle of movies from a licensing agent in order to provide their institutions with movie content – while avoiding copyright infringement lawsuits. Thus far, I've been unable to locate anyone at OSP who's been hiding behind a morale curtain of dismay demanding strict limitations on AIC media content. That is, beyond exercising common sense practices, which is exemplified by the exceptions to the restrictions placed on AIC media content (see *Movie, TV Series and Video Game Selection Criteria and Process* below at Requirements, 6).

Presumably, ODOC can amend their contract with Swank and/or other licensing agents for the purpose of expanding the breadth and scope of media content permitted within the institution. However, the motivation to make this happen will have to come from the collective will of the ODOC, OSP administration and AIC community. (This will be the topic of an upcoming article).

Below are the current ODOC guidelines on regulating media content at OSP.

Movie, TV Series and Video Game Selection Criteria and Process

Background:

The Oregon Department of Corrections (ODOC) has a genuine penological interest in screening movies and video games shown to ODOC inmates for security, programming, and department credibility reasons.

Security:

Movies and video games available to inmates in common areas where the profile of the viewing audience is unknown and unpredictable are of particular concern. In such circumstances, inflammatory content or language can incite or contribute to conflict causing an immediate danger to staff and inmates.

Programming:

Movies and video games that promote or excuse criminal activity or that support ongoing criminal fantasy and ideation are counterproductive to the goals and objectives of the Oregon Accountability Model.

Department Credibility:

Movies and video games that display gratuitous violence or graphic violent sexual encounters contradict the public policy of the Oregon Department of Corrections as embodied in the Oregon Accountability Model and the Mission Statement.

The department, in its discretion, makes entertainment like movies and gaming stations available to some inmates in institutions as part of the Non-cash incentive programming. This is done in addition to satellite TV programming. The department has a history of providing these opportunities to inmates for the following reasons:

1. As low cost approved activity to structure non-work time and to manage the inmate populations.
2. As an element of programming to support approved education classes or other approved programming.
3. As a low-cost method of supporting and encouraging cultural diversity and cross-cultural knowledge.

Scope:

ODOC provided materials: The criteria in this document will apply to all purchased, donated or rented media entertainment made available by the ODOC in its prison facilities.

Third Party Providers: Media entertainment made available through third party providers on tablets, kiosks, etc. are also subject to these content criteria. Third party providers, however, are required to have their own licensing agreements and are not covered under ODOC's agreement.

Definitions:

Common Areas: Areas like dayrooms or recreation spaces where inmates are allowed to congregate and where the profile of the inmates gathered together is unknown and variable.

Approved Movies, TV Series and Video Games: Movies, series and games that are reviewed and approved by institution staff for use by the inmate population in areas including common areas, incentive spaces, and cells for entertainment or programming purposes. A facility may, in its discretion, choose to show a movie or game in a controlled setting for programming purposes, that they would not show to the general population.

Prohibited Movies, TV Series and Video Games: Movies, series and games that are reviewed and deemed inappropriate by institution staff for viewing by the inmate population in any area of any ODOC institution including program, special activity, religious areas, or inmate personal televisions in housing units.

Requirements:

1. All movies and games should be screened including movies and games used in common areas like dayrooms or recreation spaces; movies and games used for education classes or other programming sessions; and movies and games used for inmates in small groups like special interest groups, clubs, cultural gatherings, or broadcast to inmates personal televisions.
2. Only "R" rated movies or below can be considered for approval. Only "T" rated video games or below can be considered for approval.
3. Only movies available under the current licensing agreement(s) may be selected. The Department has a Public Performance License with SWANK Motion Pictures to provide such agreements. Movies not listed on SWANK cannot be shown without other licensing approvals. Listings can be found at: <http://www.swank.com/> Institutions should verify that a movie that is being considered is still licensed with SWANK or other licensing entity each time that it is shown, as agreements with studios can change.
4. Designated institution staff will complete a primary assessment of every movie and game which may include one or more of the following elements:
 - a. Reading detailed reviews online or through other resources that provide a synopsis of the movie or game and its content.
 - b. Staff viewing or playing.
5. In general, movies or games emphasizing the following behaviors or containing inflammatory themes or scenes will not be shown:
 - a. Physical abuse of children or women.
 - b. Rape or sexual abuse.
 - c. Gang related activities.
 - d. Prison life depicting escape attempts, group disturbances, official misconduct or staff abuse of power, smuggling, prison sexual assault or rape, prison gang activity, or other serious violations of the rule on inmate prohibited conduct or the staff code of conduct.
 - e. Racism or racial violence.
 - f. Gratuitous violence presented as entertainment.
 - g. Graphic depictions of execution or torture presented as entertainment and without content.
 - h. Graphic depictions of self-mutilation or grotesque dismemberment.
 - i. Graphic and pervasive use of illegal drugs portrayed in a sympathetic or glorified fashion.
 - j. Depictions in any way of the life, crimes and criminal activities involving inmates currently incarcerated by ODOC.

6. An institution may decide that a movie or game may be of value despite its content. Exceptions will be considered if the movie is viewed in a controlled and supervised setting like classrooms, special activities, or program groups for any of the following reasons:

- Historical value
- Rehabilitative or restorative themes
- Cultural value and/or significance
- Educational value
- Artistic merit

Central Office Oversight and Support:

1. These guidelines are made available by Central Office to assist facilities in making decisions appropriate for their setting. There is no central reviewing and tracking process for media.
2. Any changes or clarifications to these guidelines can be directed to the Operations of Correctional Services Administrator assigned to oversee them. (Dated May 11, 2018). (RPL).

Barred from Love? (By Adam S. Thomas)

Human beings require certain essential elements in order to maintain a healthy existence. Food and water are obviously two of these elements. Every Adult In Custody (AIC) is readily supplied these by the Oregon Department of Corrections (ODOC). However, there is another element of critical importance, which is necessary for a healthy existence to be maintained, and this is all too frequently absent from the daily life of an AIC. This element is the natural expression of love, the outward show of affection. A human being can only survive for a short period of time without food and water. Granted, a human being can survive without love and affection, but is that really a life worth living?

I've been incarcerated since I was 18 years old, which means that for the last 20 years I have had to grow up, mature, and survive as an adult under the direct supervision and control of the ODOC. Even though I am technically an adult, I have sadly missed out on a tremendous amount of life-affirming and life-fulfilling opportunities that are the sustenance upon which adulthood thrives and prospers. When a human being is deprived of love and affection, he or she can be compared to a flower that is being deprived sunlight. Just as a flower deprived of sunlight will not bloom but instead wilt, a human being deprived of love and affection cannot grow as a healthy adult, but instead exhibiting immature and reckless behavior, as well as sinking into a deep well of depression. Love and affection are as necessary for a healthy existence as food and water.

As AIC, we see ourselves as deserving of being treated like adults while in custody. Part of being an adult is possessing a level of maturity when it comes to certain subjects: music, films of an adult nature, relationships of a romantic nature, and video games that contain adult themes. Equally, certain types of photography require a basic level of adult maturity when being observed. As adults, we can have subscriptions to various periodicals that contain nudity – for instance, Playboy. However, we as adults are not permitted to receive similar photography from our girlfriends or wives or female pen pals. For many adults, not just those in custody, such photos can represent a form of affection from a loving partner. By denying AIC the privilege of receiving photos from their girlfriends or wives merely because there is nudity, you essentially tell each AIC that he or she is not mature enough to see such material or that there is something inherently offensive about the naked human form. This can have negative effects on an adult's ability to maintain a healthy maturity when it comes to all forms of nudity, which equally disrupts that adult's ability to have a healthy romantic relationship.

An outward show of love and affection from an AIC to another AIC is penalized often by the administration, causing an even more vacant space in the heart for love to bloom. In short, love and affection come in various forms and styles and we as AIC, in order to grow and mature emotionally and psychologically, should not be stricken from the opportunities of life to fully enjoy our adulthood, especially for those of us who have been forced to become adults while in custody.

Counting Down the 100 Books to Read Before You Die (Trust book recommendations from real people, not robots)

Continuing from March 2021's newsletter...

70. Murder on the Orient Express by Agatha Christie

The most famous of Christie's detective stories featuring Monsieur Poirot and his formidable 'grey cells.' When a snowstorm grounds the luxurious Orient Express, death ensues onboard — and it's up to the detective to piece together the puzzle, especially since everyone on the train seems to have an alibi.

71. Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck

George Milton and Lennie Small make an odd couple, working on California's dusty ranches and dreaming of a shack of their own. But all might be lost when they move to a new farm — even each other. This is Steinbeck at his peak in this heart-wrenching story about friendship and loss.

72. The Old Man and the Sea by Ernest Hemingway

In this short novel, Santiago is an old fisherman who one day happens upon a marlin that might be able to make him rich. One of Hemingway's best, *The Old Man and the Sea* won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1953.

73. Oliver Twist by Charles Dickens

Young Oliver Twist is an orphaned boy living on the streets when he escapes to London in the 1800s. But that's just the start of his story, as Oliver goes on to befriend a gang of juvenile thieves — and a pickpocket named The Artful Dodger.

74. One Hundred Years of Solitude by Gabriel Garcia Marquez

Gabriel Garcia Marquez covers seven generations of one family while exploring themes of fatalism, subjectivity, death, and time in a world where magical elements combine seamlessly with real life. One of the most important works in Spanish literature and a landmark of magical realism in its own right.

75. One Thousand and One Arabian Nights by Unknown

You might vaguely know the gist of the story behind *One Thousand and One Arabian Nights*, but have you ever actually read it before? This is the must-read translation, as new bride Scheherazade must wittily come up with new tales to escape her execution night after night.

76. A Passage to India by E.M. Forster

Adela Quested is to be engaged to Ronny Moore in Chandrapore, which necessitates a journey to India in the 1920s. This novel, regarded as one of the must-read books of the twentieth century, was instrumental in launching a postcolonial discourse against the backdrop of the Indian independence movement.

77. Pedro Paramo by Juan Rulfo

In the town of Comala, where ghosts are indistinguishable from the living, young Juan Preciado goes to look for his estranged father. In his only published novel, Rulfo weaves together a story that's told in such a way that readers are left wondering who's truly alive and who's dead — and whether there's more to the town than first meets the eye.

78. The Phantom Tollbooth by Norton Juster

From the mind of Norton Juster comes a magical journey. Milo is a young boy who's beyond bored of everything — that is, until a tollbooth appears in his room one day and transports him into a land that's the opposite of dull. *The Phantom Tollbooth* is a classic children's fantasy.

79. Pippi Longstocking by Astrid Lindgren

You won't find many characters like Pippi Longstocking. Freckled, red-haired, and nine-years old, Pippi also happens to be the strongest girl in the world: she can lift a horse *with one hand*. Think of all the adventures she can go on with strength like that! (RPL)

Distress Tolerance Skill Series (from OSP's Behavioral Health Services)

Skills you can use to enhance your life and work:

This skill is about taking care of yourself when you are under stress or having a difficult time. Self-soothing skills provide comfort and serves as an intentional distraction from frustration by helping you stay in the present moment. Self-soothing is about using all of your senses: seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, and tasting in a healthy supportive way.

Try the self-soothe activity below:

Drink a warm cup of tea, smell the fragrance, feel the warmth on your hands as you hold the mug, slowly sip the tea and taste the flavors. Do this while staying present with each piece of this simple task. Notice how you feel after taking time for yourself.

Skill Benefits:

- ☐ This skill provides alternatives to doing something that causes additional stress or makes you feel worse.
- ☐ Your stress is reduced when you take time for yourself.
- ☐ Some self-soothing techniques are really simple human pleasures that improve any situation. (RPL)

ITS TIME TO DIVEST FROM PRISON AND INVEST IN COMMUNITIES – by Shannon Wright and Amy Davidson

The racism inherent in our criminal justice system is finally being widely recognized – for centuries, Black, Indigenous, Latinx and other people of color have been denied true public safety. But this is only one of the crises Oregon faces today. We are also dealing with the corona virus, which has found its way into eight of our 14 prisons, thrusting a third of incarcerated Oregonians into quarantines that feel like solitary confinement.

And the pandemic has also triggered a massive \$4.4 billion state budget shortfall, leaving lawmakers scrambling to preserve education, housing, Medicaid and other vital services. All three emergencies can be addressed with the same approach that Oregon has been successfully using

since 2013: we must divest from prisons and invest in communities. We can no longer squander scarce dollars on long prison sentences that don't work. To advance safety, equality and healing, Oregon must:

1. Reduce the spread of COVID in prisons by safely transitioning people out early

Substantial early transitions from prison can preserve public safety while alleviating COVID spread. Social distancing is the most basic corona virus prevention strategy, but it's nearly impossible in prisons. Despite Oregon Governor Kate Brown's incremental releases, people who are held in, work in, and live around prisons remain at serious risk.

Oregon officials said that safeguarding against COVID means lowering the prison population from 14,500 to 8,700 as reported by The Oregonian. This 40% reduction would be safe, reasonable and achievable; however, our communities would first need to strengthen community supports for crime survivors as well as for services that help system-involved people be successful. That infrastructure takes time. In the meantime, we can reduce the prison population significantly over the next six months by increasing the number of early transitions for people convicted of drug and property crimes or who are determined to be safe to transition and have served at least 50% of their sentences.

This approach would save taxpayer dollars, reduce corona virus spread and stop incarcerating people who don't pose a significant safety risk.

2. Close two prisons

Oregon's sprawling and expensive network of 14 prisons stands in the way of aligning our state's budget with our state's values. Smaller prisons should be prioritized for closure, because that would free up more dollars and still keep the corona virus risk down in the remaining 12 prisons.

We should also focus on closing rural prisons for public safety reasons. They have fewer programs and culturally specific stories that foster rehabilitation and reduce crime. Also, people housed in rural prisons disproportionately come from the state's most populous areas, and the increased distance from home dramatically reduces family connections and hinders post-incarceration success.

Opponents of closing rural prisons argue that the local communities would suffer profound economic loss, but we can't tear some families apart to support the incomes of others. Surely our state can create a prison closure plan with economic solutions that don't rely on imprisoning people who are more wounded than helped by harsh prison sentences.

3. Reform prison sentences in the 2021 legislative session

Oregon disproportionately polices, charges and incarcerates Black Oregonians to the point where one out of every 21 Black Oregonians is held in prison, according to data from The Sentencing Project. This, as The Oregonian reported, places Oregon seventh in the nation for our rate of incarcerating African Americans. This is not public safety.

But, Oregon has the experience we need to safely and equitably reform prison sentences. Since 2013, Oregon has kept two prisons closed, is averting \$527 million in prison spending, and is projected to reduce our prison use by 15% over 10 years.

It is a meaningful start, but we must continue reforming sentencing laws and systematically divesting from this expensive, ineffective and racist system.

4. Invest in communities of color, rural communities and local public safety solutions

Shrinking prisons isn't enough to transform our response to crime. We must also invest averted prison costs into communities that have historically been underserved. Crime survivors, particularly of color, continue to have little access to culturally specific services. These limitations add greater barriers to getting help for trauma, which often results in higher rates of victimization and criminalization.

To equitably support communities that have been most harmed and least helped by our public safety systems, we must invest equitably in local, culturally specific programs. We can deliver prevention, treatment and supportive services that our communities need to be safe, strong and successful.

Join the fight



Now is the time to advance equity and healing. These proposals are bold, but we can transform our system together. **Add your name at safetyandjustice.org/petition**. We must divest from prisons, invest in communities and transform our response to crime and violence. (Shannon Wright is deputy director and Amy Davidson is crime survivor program director at Partnership for Safety Justice, Oregon's leading public safety and criminal justice policy reform

organization, transforming society's response to crime with innovative solutions that ensure accountability, equity and healing). (RPL).

Lifers' Club Banquet Menu

With the institution on the path of slowly returning to normal operations, the Lifers' Club would like to hear from its members regarding the next banquet menu? Does anyone have any ideas and/or suggestions? If so, please send a kite to the Lifers' Club so that we can take them into consideration. Thanks, we look forward to hearing your suggestions. (RPL).



A Message From The Lifers' Unlimited Club – Re: Lifers' Membership Cards

One of the Lifers' Club goals for 2021 is to find ways to enhance the benefits for its membership. Recently, the Lifers' Club distributed yellow Membership Cards to all of its active members who are in good standing with the club. The purpose of the Membership Card is two fold. First, in an effort to do more for the club's membership, the card extends a \$50.00 credit to the cardholder. Meaning that if you bring your card up to the Lifers' Club office you can fill out a CD-28 and make a walk a way purchase for up to \$50.00 without having to wait for your CD-28 to clear. Once you make a purchase – and after your CD-28 clears – the privilege will reset and you'll be able to make another walk a way purchase for up to \$50.00 (and so on and so forth). Second, the yellow Membership Card makes it easy for the Lifers' Club clerks to "identify" the club's membership and extend them the \$50.00 credit when they come to the office to make a purchase. As a reminder you must have your card with you to receive the credit.

Finally, on a related note, the Lifers' Club asks for your patience as we adjust to the impact this new way of doing business will have on our inventory. In simple terms, until we're able to fully gauge the impact of extending this credit to our membership – and adjust our coffee, candy, syrup, etc., orders in accordance – our in stock items may fluctuate. So, thanks for your patience as we transition to this new way of doing business. We hope that you'll find it to be simpler and more convenient going forward. (RPL).

Thank You Notes Sent From The Lifers' Club...

Dear Critical Resistance PDX:

Greetings. As always, we hope this email finds you in good health and spirit. This is just a quick "thank you" note from the Lifers' Unlimited Club, its membership and the AIC at the Oregon State Penitentiary (OSP) for providing us with the most recent round of information regarding the Economic Impact Statements. Please know the AIC incarcerated at OSP recognize and appreciate Critical Resistance's effort(s) to help us receive our stimulus checks. So, thank you and be well.

~ Peace ~

Lifers' Unlimited Club (RPL)

Dear Mr. Hickey:

Greetings! As always, the Lifers' Unlimited Club hopes this email finds you and yours in good health and spirit. We're writing to acknowledge receiving to two packages of cards that you sent to us - and - to say THANK YOU for the time, effort and thought that you put into them. Please know that they will be dispensed to the Lifers' Club membership and club presidents per your instructions. Again, thank you and please know that your efforts on our behalf are appreciated.

~ Peace ~

Lifers' Unlimited Club (RPL)

Editor's note: The two cards that you received with this month's newsletter are from Mr. Hickey. (RPL).

First Pop-Up BBQ of the Year

Thanks, for making the first 2021 BBQ a success! The Lifers' Club looks forward to serving the community (weather permitting) each weekend... Your participation is appreciated!



The Giving Tree (by Shel Silverstein)

Once there was a tree...and she loved a little boy.
And every day the boy would come and he would gather
her leaves and make them into crowns and play king of
the forest.

He would climb up her trunk and swing from her branches
and eat apples.

And they would play hide-and-go-seek.

And when he was tired, he would sleep in her shade.

And the boy loved the tree...very much.

And the tree was happy.

But time went by.

And the boy grew older.

And the tree was often alone.

Then one day the boy came to the tree and
the tree said, "Come, Boy, come and
climb up my trunk and swing from my
branches and eat apples and play in
my shade and be happy."

"I am too big to climb and play,"
said the boy.

"I want to buy things and have fun.

I want some money.

Can you give me some money?"

"I'm sorry" said the tree, "but I have
no money.

I only have leaves and apples.

Take my apples, Boy and sell them in the city.

Then you will have money and you will be happy."

And so the boy climbed up the tree and gathered
her apples and carried them away.

And the tree was happy.

But the boy stayed away for a long time... and
the tree was sad.

And then one day the boy came back and
the tree shook with joy and she said, "Come, Boy, climb
up my trunk and swing from my branches and be happy."

"I'm too busy to climb trees," said the boy.

I want a house to keep me warm," he said.

"I want a wife and I want children, and so I need a house.

Can you give me a house?"

"I have no house," said the tree.

"The forest is my house, but you may cut off my branches
and build a house.

Then you will be happy."

And so the boy cut off her branches and carried them
away to build his house.

And the tree was happy.

But the boy stayed away for a long time.

And when he came back, the tree was so happy she
could hardly speak.

"Come, Boy," she whispered, "come and play."

"I am too old and sad to play," said the boy.

"I want a boat that will take me far away from here.

Can you give me a boat?"

"Cut down my trunk and make a boat," said the tree.

"Then you can sail away... and be happy."

And so the boy cut down her trunk and made a boat
and sailed away.

And the tree was happy... but not really.

And after a long time the boy came
back again.

"I am sorry, Boy," said the tree, "but
I have nothing left to give you –
My apples are gone."

"My teeth are too weak for apples,"
said the boy.

"My branches are gone," said the tree.

"You cannot swing on them..."

"I am too old to swing on branches," said the boy.

"My trunk is gone," said the tree.

"You cannot climb..."

"I am too tired to climb," said the boy.

"I am sorry," sighed the tree.

"I wish that I could give you something... but I have
nothing left. I am just an old stump. I am sorry..."

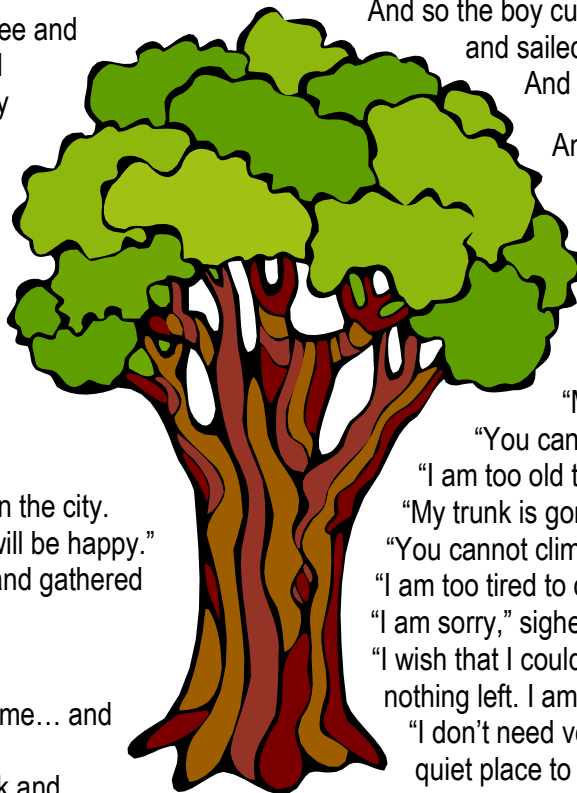
"I don't need very much now," said the boy, "just a
quiet place to sit and rest. I am very tired."

"Well," said the tree, straightening herself up as much
as she could, "well, an old stump is good for sitting and
resting. Come, Boy, sit down. Sit down and rest."

And the boy did.

And the tree was happy.

The end.



Lifers' Unlimited Club
Newsletter

Oregon State Penitentiary
Activities Department
2605 State Street
Salem, Oregon 97310-0505

Lifers' Unlimited Club 2021 Calendar

Unfortunately, all events are still closed until social distancing restrictions are lifted. We will, however, do our best to keep everyone advised as events and/or circumstances change. Thank you for your patience.

Courtney McFadden, Staff Advisor
Lifers' Unlimited Club
Phone: 503-378-2289

Email: courtney.d.mcfadden@doc.state.or.us

Just a reminder the Lifers' Unlimited Club Pop-Up BBQs are back! All purchases will be by punch card only. Please know that we're open to suggestions as far as the menu goes, therefore, if you have any ideas please send them to the Lifers' Club for consideration. Thanks.



~ * ~ * ~ **WE ALL HAVE UNLIMITED POWER** ~ * ~ * ~

Lifers' Unlimited Club Executive Body

President:	Robert Kelley
Vice President:	Marty Wendt
Secretary:	Juan Solis
Treasure:	Jeff McCarty
Facilitator:	Stephen Weavill

Mission Statement

The purpose of the Lifer's Unlimited Club is to unite the incarcerated men of OSP with a goal of improving the quality of life for those inside and outside of these walls. The club will work with charity programs, informational services, youth speaking panels and other positive programs. We cannot change the past, however, we believe through rehabilitation and pro-social behavior we can create a more productive future.